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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 002959

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SUBJECT: PORTUGAL ON KOSOVO, BOSNIA, GEORGIA, AND RUSSIA

REF: A) LISBON 2916 B) LISBON 2771

Classified By: POL CHIEF TROY FITRELL, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. According to MFA Director for European Affairs Liliana Araujo, avoiding bloodshed in the Balkans is one of Portugal's top EU presidency goals. Should Kosovars declare independence in the near term, the Portuguese believe the EU will be able to issue a statement that takes note of the declaration, without recognizing it, thus freeing the member states to act of their own volition. While Kosovo deservedly receives the headlines, the Portuguese are equally worried about Bosnia and precipitate action by Bosnian Serbs. Georgia's backsliding on democracy is also of concern to the Portuguese, who fear it may lead to unwelcome reactions by Russia. End summary.

¶2. (U) Araujo provided us on November 15 a tour d'horizon of issues related to Kosovo, Bosnia, Georgia, and Russia. During the week of November 19-23, Araujo said she would chair an EU Troika with Russia, an EU Troika with Moldova, and the Eastern European Working Group (COEST).

Kosovo  
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¶3. (C/NF) Araujo said she is expecting a final proposal from the negotiating troika (EU, U.S., and Russia) that ignores the current or eventual status of Kosovo, but focuses on details such as protection of minorities, access to historical sites, free movement, economic issues, and justice issues. She qualified her Foreign Minister's comment (Ref A) that the EU is close to consensus "to outline EU support for independence" to mean that the EU may issue a statement that takes note of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), rather than recognize it. (Note: In a separate meeting with DCM, the Prime Minister's senior diplomatic advisor, Jorge Roza de Oliveira, confirmed Portugal's intention -- if the Troika efforts do not produce a negotiated settlement -- to issue an anodyne statement post-December 10 noting a declaration of independence that gives cover for recognition by individual EU member states. He lamented that Kosovo was the one issue during Portugal's presidency over which they have no control. End note.)

¶4. (C/NF) In regard to the legal underpinning of any move, she said each of the 27 EU member states had its own legal regime, so analysis of whether UNSCR 1244 allows for recognition of Kosovar independence, deployment of an ESDP mission, or extension of a UN mandate is still ongoing. She confirmed that there is a desire on the part of many member states to get the ESDP mission into Kosovo as soon as possible, and certainly before December 10. She noted that unfortunately, like all other issues that require consensus, a single state -- in this case Cyprus -- can hold this up and no further movement is likely.

¶15. (C/NF) Noting that public statements regarding Kosovo's future are rarely helpful, Araujo said that U/S Burn's public statement regarding a "transition period" of a few months was valuable and should help keep Kosovar emotions in check.

#### Bosnia

¶16. (C/NF) Araujo said that in the Portuguese view, Bosnia is much more volatile than Kosovo and that there is a much greater potential for bloodshed. Her Minister and the MFA Coordinator for the region were in Bosnia November 14. Although she had not yet received a full readout of the trip, she said that her Minister had pressed the Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation leadership on the need to avoid precipitate action. She relayed her fears that Bosnian Serbs would use the Kosovo issue to initiate violence in Bosnia.

#### Georgia

¶17. (C/NF) Araujo expressed a concern bordering on anger regarding recent events in Georgia. President Saakashvili, she posited, had backtracked on all of his commitments under the European Neighborhood Policy and had returned Georgia to dictatorship. She stressed that the EU and the U.S. need to reject his actions firmly.

¶18. (C/NF) Araujo said the current EU statement on Georgia was too weak, due to a few member states ("old and new" she said, without naming them) that were not interested in taking a tough line. One of the new member states, she said, was pleased to use the issue to antagonize Russia. Nonetheless, Araujo expected stronger language to emerge from the upcoming

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GAERC, more in line with the EU's recent demarche on the subject. Araujo worried that Saakashvili's actions could spark aggression from Russia, particularly regarding Abkhazia.

#### Russia

¶19. (C/NF) On Russia, Araujo said the MFA went back and parsed Putin's statements during the EU-Russia Summit regarding OSCE election observers (Ref B). Putin had said, they found, that he would invite observers consonant with the terms and responsibilities of OSCE membership plus those limitations stipulated by Russian law. Upon analyzing Putin's statements, she said she was not surprised by the limitations Putin had subsequently imposed.

¶110. (C/NF) Araujo also stated that Putin has found a solution to Transdnierstra that qualifies as a Russian victory. She would not elaborate but said that it would be unveiled in December.

#### Comment

¶111. (C/NF) Portugal's number one priority in the Balkans during its presidency is to avoid a bloodletting. At the same time, FM Amado has made it clear that he views maintaining a unified EU response as a critical responsibility during Portugal's EU leadership. Achievement of a sustainable solution on Kosovo during Portugal's presidency would in their view be optimal -- and Araujo and her Minister are actively engaged toward that end. The Portuguese recognize, however, that reaching as unified an EU response as possible will likely require intense internal discussion beyond the December 10 deadline, probably slipping into the Slovenian presidency.

Hoffman